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THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST ANTI-RACIST ORGANISATION

Liberation

INCORPORATING THE MOVEMENT FOR COLONIAL FREEDOM

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INCORPORATING THE MOVEMENT FOR COLONIAL FREEDOM (MCF) founded by our late President FENNER BROCKWAY
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Violation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms
in Any Part of the World

Mr. Chairman and distinguished delegates,

The Kingdom of Bhutan is characterised by a consistent pattern of gross violations of human rights for many years. Because of the absolute monarchy, the absence of a written constitution or bill of rights and an independent judiciary, the people have been denied their basic human rights, including the right to political participation in the governance of the country. Political parties, unions and associations are banned or discouraged and the criticism of the king and his family-rule can even result in the imposition of the death penalty.

After the introduction of the controversial Citizenship Act in 1985 and the so called *Bhutanisation* process in 1989, there has been an increase in repression, particularly in southern part of Bhutan because of popular resistance for democracy and human rights. Reports are coming in of massive arrest and arbitrary detention, torture, extra-judicial killings and disappearances, and incidence of gang-rapes and the mistreatment of prisoners in custody have been well-documented.

The people of Bhutan have been thus forced to leave their country to take shelters either in India or Nepal. The number of refugees has reached more than 45,000 and they are living in poor and inhuman conditions by the lack of adequate relief services.

Mr. Chairman:

My next topic is Indonesia where violations of human rights have been persistent and systematic. In occupied East Timor, the Santa Cruz massacre of 12 November last year was justly condemned throughout the world, but it was only the latest series of bloodbaths that have stained the earth in many parts of the Indonesian archipelago. But, until November 1991, the practice of killings and massacres by the Indonesian regime went largely unnoticed.

The present Indonesian government came into power in 1965 after a frenzy of killings that lasted many months. Between half a million and one million alleged communists were slain in what has been described as one of the worst crimes of the century. Yet the Indonesian government emerged unscathed from international criticism. On the contrary, even as the blood of the victims was still flowing, the western powers rushed to prop up the new regime.

Indonesia has the dubious reputation of being ruled by one of the world's longest serving dictators who has held onto power with the support of an oppressive military security apparatus. After the blood-soaked sixties came the seventies, the decade of large scale political imprisonment when tens of thousands of Indonesians were incarcerated in prison-camps and on the island of Buru without any charge or trial. Then followed the eighties when massacres again took the centre stage.

In 1983/84, death-squad killings swept the major cities of Indonesia. The authorities justified them as a way to combat petty criminals. These were officially called 'mysterious killings'. Although no one in Indonesia dared to say so publicly, everyone knew that they were the work of the security forces. Many years later, the President took personal responsibility for the shootings in his autobiography. Even today, the policy of "shoot to kill" is a common practice. The police commanders of Medan and Jakarta openly propagate this policy. In August 1991, the press reported that 17 suspects had been shot by the police in metropolitan Jakarta, eight of whom were mortally wounded.

Then came the tragic event in September 1984, with the shooting in cold blood of people in a peaceful Muslim demonstration in Tanjung Priok, the harbour of Jakarta. This massacre provides the most striking parallel to what happened in Dili seven years later. In 1984 too, troops opened fire on peaceful demonstrators, chased and clubbed wounded survivors, loaded the corpses into trucks and rushed them off to secret

burial places. After that, fire-engines were on the scene, hosing away the blood stains. Just like in Dili last November, no one has been able to verify estimates that several hundred died in Tanjung Priok.

In 1987, a youth demonstration in Ujung Pandang against a police ruling about wearing helmets was dealt with by trigger-happy police and more casualties occurred. Then came the killing in Lampung, South Sumatra in 1989 of dozens of innocent villagers, accused of plotting against the state. Again no one has been able to verify reports that more than a hundred were killed.

Apart from East Timor, the latest in this catalogue of premeditated mass killings is the on-going campaign being waged by the army in Aceh in North Sumatra, where the human rights situation has steadily worsened since 1990. Extra-judicial executions have been going on there for over two years. Murder squads strike at random, spreading fear among villagers. Many people have disappeared, thousands have been arrested and tortured, and there is frequent gang-raping of women and many hundreds of Acehnese have fled from the Indonesian terror to seek refuge in neighbouring Malaysia. Despite persistent reports by human rights organisations such as Asia Watch, Amnesty International, Tapol and the Legal Aid Institute, as well as a number of foreign press reports, the international community has so far failed to act. It is a matter of profound regret that the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture was refused permission to visit Aceh during his recent trip to Indonesia.

In the case of Dili massacre, the international community denounced the Indonesian government because foreign eye witnesses were present. One of whom has even recorded the event on a film. For the first time in more than a quarter of a century of slaying people at will, there were calls for an international inquiry. To deflect these calls, the Indonesian government set up a National Inquiry Commission which has no credibility because it lacks independence.

Mr. Chairman:

This UN Commission should heed the demands of many groups in Indonesia for investigations of all these massacres and killings. These events should not be allowed to be erased with the passage of time.

Is it not strange that this august body has heard so few voices from concerned Indonesians about these terrible events? One of the reasons is the *cekal* (cegah-tangkal) system, the latest addition to the Indonesian

vocabulary which means blacklisting. The right to leave one's own country and return to it has long been recognised as a basic human right under article 13(2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

As with every other basic human right, the Indonesian government has never recognised any such right. *Cekal* prevents certain people from leaving or entering the country. The Department of Immigration has maintained a computerised list of about 17,000 persons for security reasons. The *Cekal*-list is composed of requests from the Supreme Court, the Office of the Attorney General, the Department of Security and Defense, the Security agency *BAKORSTANAS*, the intelligence units *Bakin* and *Bais* and the revenue office. The ban applies to Indonesian dissidents, academics, journalists, human rights activists and 'unfriendly' foreigners.

The *cekal*-ban is far more wider. It is virtually impossible for former members and sympathisers of the banned Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) to obtain passports which means a blanket travel ban on this particular group of about 1.4 million. Furthermore, they are also subjected to constant surveillance, compulsory security checks and arbitrary orders.

Cekal is now being used as a means for not allowing to read a poetry or publishing articles. *Cekal* is becoming synonymous with censorship.

Mr. Chairman:

Recently, the Development Council of European Community has made a direct link between development aid and human rights. We support this move and hope that it will be consistently applied without any double standards. The *apartheid* regime of South Africa has been a good example of coordinated efforts for isolation by the international community. We request for similar policies against the Indonesian government, including the appointment of a UN Special Rapporteur on Indonesia, followed by an arms embargo, putting an end to economic assistance, and impose appropriate sanctions.

We also urge the Commission to appoint a Special Rapporteur to investigate gross violations of human rights in Bhutan.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.